

Sage-grouse and Sage-grouse Habitat Management

August 25, 2010

CURRENT STATUS

The Bureau of Land Management in Colorado has developed is developing guidance on how to best manage Gunnison and Greater Sage-grouse (SG) on public lands.

BLM Colorado is already incorporating innovative SG management practices into our Resource Management Plans (RMP) in coordination with the Colorado Division of Wildlife (CDOW) and other partners. This involves management or projects designed to benefit SG habitat, or avoidance of core areas by more invasive activities where effective mitigation cannot be applied. SG habitat objectives are currently being considered and incorporated in grazing permit renewals, as well as other permitting actions.

All nine RMPs that guide management of SG in Colorado are currently undergoing revisions or amendments that may inform local SG management.

BACKGROUND

BLM Colorado manages slightly less than 50 percent of Gunnison and Greater SG habitat in the state.

Greater SG were recently classified as a candidate species following the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) Endangered Species Act (ESA) determination of “warranted but precluded from listing due to higher listing priorities.” A Gunnison SG ESA determination is expected in mid-September 2010.

Both species are managed as a BLM sensitive species in Colorado. The BLM Washington Office has provided SG guidance specific to energy development, RMP development, fire management and structure management in SG habitat. The BLM continues to emphasize implementation of state and local SG conservation strategies, coordination with CDOW and other partners, and better understanding of available SG research and SG habitat conditions in Colorado.

BLM Colorado will continue to work with CDOW on a local level in research studies, habitat improvement projects, population and habitat monitoring, and minimizing impacts to SG from multiple-use activities.

BLM Colorado is planning to develop a Candidate Conservation Agreement (CCA) for Gunnison SG in the Gunnison Basin on federally managed lands to complement the statewide CCA with Assurances developed by CDOW and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) for use on private or state lands.

